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VOICE of the Valley

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MAPLE VALLEY, WASHINGTON
TUESDAY, MAY 18, 2004

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CELEBRATING THE completion of the Maple Valley "Gateway" during a ribbon cutting ceremony were: (L-R) TIB Executive Director Steve Goucester; Council members Noel Gerken, Victoria Laise Jonas, Dave Pilgrim, Linda Johnson, Mayor Laure Iddings; and Susan Sanderson, Capital Projects Manager for the City of Maple Valley. (See story on page 11)

Maple Valley celebrates completion of the City "Gateway"

By Kathleen Kear

The City of Maple Valley celebrated its second ribbon cutting ceremony within a three week period at its most recent ceremony taking place on Monday, May 10.

The final stage of a three stage process in creating the "Maple Valley Gateway" has been completed. Not only are cars able to freely move in and out of the City through the "Gateway", but so also can bicycles and pedestrians. This third and newest stage of the project comes complete with a retaining wall, handrails, sidewalks, new street lighting, landscaping, bike lanes, pavement overlay and median.

With great enthusiasm, Mayor Laure Iddings said, "Work on the Wax to Witte project started in September 2003 - and is being completed under budget!"

The three-phase project to improve Maple Valley Highway from S.E. 231st to Witte Road S.E. began in 2000 and was accomplished through a series of partnerships. Major partners joining the City of Maple Valley were the Washington State Transportation Improvement Board (TIB), the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), and Polygon Northwest. The TIB paid approximately 60 percent of the phase that was just completed, which had a total cost of about \$1.3 million. Key individuals recognized for their special efforts were Don Neil from Westwater Construction, Nandez Miller from the engineering firm KPG, Pam Gunderson from WSDOT, and Susan Sanderson the City's capital project manager.

Prior to the ribbon-cutting ceremony, TIB Executive Director Steve Goucester presented a beautiful wood plaque in the shape of the state of Washington to Mayor Iddings for the City of Maple Valley. Printed on the plaque is the follow-

ing: "In recognition of our successful partnership in completing Maple Valley Highway (SR-169) May 10, 2004. Grant funding provided by: The Washington State Transportation Improvement Board - With the support of your 5th District State Legislators - Senator Cheryl Pflug, Representative Glenn Anderson, Representative Jay Rodne."

"This ribbon cutting marks the opening of a common dream that our City Council has had of having a functional and pleasant entry into Maple Valley," said Mayor Iddings. "While it makes the intersections at 231st, Wax and Witte roads more efficient, it also moves forward our plans for allowing people to walk or bike to some of the key business areas in Maple Valley."

The next major capital improvement project to be completed will be reconstruction of Witte Road between S.E. 240th and S.E. 244th near Lake Wilderness Elementary. This will be the first of many phases of improvement along that corridor. When that project is completed in June, Maple Valley will have completed three major transportation improvements in as many months: Maple Valley Highway Phase III, the S.E. 263rd Street Bridge, and Witte Road Phase I.

Transportation projects that are being engineered currently and either should be underway or completed in 2005 include the reconstruction of the Four Corners intersection, a new signal at Maple Valley Highway and S.E. 264th (near Motoplex), and the reconstruction of the intersection of Kent-Kangley and 228th Avenue S.E.

"City Hall staff is enormously pleased that we are now in a traditional annual cycle of engineering and constructing new transportation projects. Given sufficient revenues, we should see some new projects every year, with each new one

building on the benefits of the last," said City Manager John Starbard.

Major capital improvement projects take years. The ideas for most of them come from the City's comprehensive plan. Selected projects are then funded over a multiyear period in the City's capital budget. The first important step once funding is allocated is often to undertake a more detail conceptual design, which often involves reviews by other agencies such as WSDOT. Designs are then further refined and the City Council is provided more detailed project and cost information. If the project still seems consistent with the Council's expectations, the design work transitions into specific engineering, at which point technical obstacles can be better identified and solved. Once engineering is complete and the full scope and boundaries of the project are defined, the City often needs to negotiate for and acquire right-of-way or easements from private parties. With engineering, right-of-way, and sufficient budget in hand, the City then undertakes a public bidding process, awards the contract with the Council's authorization, and begins construction.

The actual construction of the projects takes far less than the processes leading to the construction. For example, the conceptual design for the Witte Road project was adopted by the City Council in 2001, but once the bid was awarded the construction schedule was about eight months.

Couplet finds support

Business group pushes for extension two miles eastward

By Megan Cooley
Staff writer

For many Spokane Valley businesspeople, the Sprague-Appleway couplet is the enemy. Since Spokane County built the roadway in 2000, they've blamed its two one-way roads — and their lower traffic counts — for the demise of several stores.

But a group of businesspeople met Wednesday to kick off a campaign supporting the couplet and calling for its extension two miles eastward.

"It's kind of hard to find issues where people turn out in droves to support it," said John Konen, who called himself a resource person for the newly formed Finish the Job committee. "We need people to say (to the City Council), 'Hey, you're doing a great job. Continue the good work, and get the work done.'"

Konen works for Storhaug Engineering and does contract work for Spokane Valley businessman Lloyd Torgerson. Torgerson, who co-sponsored the meeting, owns property in what would be the extended Appleway corridor and likely would benefit from building the road there, Konen said after the meeting.

The county's original plan was to build the couplet to Evergreen Road. Currently, it stretches 2.7 miles, from the Interstate 90 Sprague Avenue interchange on the west end to University Road on the east end.

It would cost about \$7 million to extend the couplet. About \$5 million in federal funds for that project already have been approved and are in the Washington state Transportation Improvement Board's coffers ready for allocation. The remaining \$2 million would either need to come from the city or from the federal government again.



Steve Thompson/The Spokesman-Review

Another drive is under way to extend the Valley couplet from University Road to Evergreen Road. This part of the proposed couplet is a dumping ground.

During the last several months, the council and the city's staff have examined different scenarios for the roadway and have narrowed their focus to two options, both of which include extending Appleway to Evergreen. In one scenario, both sides of the couplet would be one-way roads. In the other, Appleway is a one-way eastbound road from the interchange to Evergreen and Sprague stays as it is now — a two-way road east of University and a one-way westbound road west of there.

At Wednesday's meeting, a large red sign read "Finish the Job. Extend the Appleway Couplet." Jerry Quinn, of the Quinn Group advertising agency, told the audience of about 40 not to focus on traffic direction.

"This is not an organization to even approach the one-way, two-way issues," he said. "Finishing the couplet is our only concern this morning."

Despite that, a few audience members made arguments for two-way travel.

"If you choose the (one-way) couplet option, you're asking retail business owners to give up their hard-earned dollars," said Carlos Landa,

who owns the Opportunity Shopping Center near the Pines Road and Sprague intersection.

Jack Riley, owner of the old Plantation restaurant building on Sprague, said 90 property and business owners have signed a petition that opposes a one-way Sprague.

Torgerson attempted to get the group back on track.

"This is about the efficient movement of traffic," he said.

Konen told the group to expect Spokane Valley's population to grow as newcomers fill in existing neighborhoods with houses.

"The infrastructure will need to be accommodated to keep up with that," he said.

Recent surveys, both scientific and informal, show strong community support for extending the couplet. Konen said Finish the Job will serve as a resource for other couplet proponents.

"There's a lot of letters that have to be written," he said.

The city also needs the county to transfer ownership of the Appleway right of way, which is a move the commissioners have discussed but haven't made yet. Quinn said that as the city de-

cides the couplet's fate, it also must address its sign code. Under the law now, businesses can only erect monument-style signs on Appleway. Business owners on the couplet are hesitant to make that investment not knowing the couplet's future, he said. In the meantime, they've plastered the north side of Appleway with balloons, banners and other less expensive — and often illegal — signs to remind drivers where to turn to reach their business.

"That's caused the clutter on Appleway you see now," Quinn said.

A final decision on the couplet is expected in December.

The city of Spokane Valley is forming an ad hoc committee to review its sign code. Are the current laws too strict or should the city do more to require complementary, tasteful signs? So far, several members of the sign industry have volunteered for the group, but few people from the general community have shown interest in participating. For more information or to apply to be on the committee, call (509) 688-0030.

For more information about the Finish the Job couplet extension committee, call Jerry Quinn at (509) 939-5845.



MAY 26, 2004 • VOLUME 113 No. 21

YOUR BEST SOURCE FOR LAKE CHELAN & ENT

Improvements planned for city 'gateway'

**Chelan receives
\$200,000 paving
grant**

By RALPH SCHWARTZ
Editor

Chelan will participate in a pilot program that pays for paving projects in small cities.

The state Transportation Improvement Board announced on Friday that Chelan will receive a \$200,000 grant for 2005 to pay for paving on certain streets.

The new program is intended to help cities get their paving done when major state projects are in their neighborhood. Next year, the state Department of

Transportation has scheduled overlay work for Highway 97A through Chelan.

The streets to be repaved under the grant are the two downtown blocks of Woodin Avenue, two blocks of Chelan Street behind City Hall, and Woodin Avenue from the old bridge to Highway 97A.

Dwane Van Epps, the city's public works director, said Chelan usually spends \$180,000 every year on its overlay project. He said any decision on whether to spend city money for additional paving or use that money elsewhere in light of the grant will be decided in the fall budget meetings.

The work is tentatively scheduled.

See GATEWAY on Page 2

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GATEWAY: Green space

Contracted from Page 1
fence in time for Memorial Day Weekend.

The public works department will repaint benches along the perimeter of the property and add new benches. The fence will be positioned to accommodate the seating areas and some planters, Witherbee said.

Shell and the city continue to negotiate the removal of the underground gas tanks, the gas pumps and the canopy, according to the mayor.

Local service organizations are also developing plans to improve the gateway route from the highway to the old bridge. According to Rotary President Lori Kahn, that club and others are looking at ways to improve two small green spaces along that stretch - the site of the tree that honors American troops and a space above it on Third Avenue that is part of the Riverwalk Park trail system.

Mayor Jay Witherbee was excited about the grant award. "It's really a jump start to the gateway," he said. "One of our major goals is to create a gateway effect into the downtown corridor."

In that same vein, work began on Monday to continue improvements to the former Texaco gas station. Shell, the owner of the property, is paying for the installation of a six-foot cyclone

Voice of the Mid-Columbia
Kennewick, Pasco and Richland, Washington

Judge orders railroad work to stop

This story was published Thursday, May 27th, 2004

By Jeff St. John Herald staff writer

A judge Wednesday ordered a halt to work on a \$7.4 million railroad underpass under Columbia Center Boulevard, giving a temporary victory to nearby residents worried the project will worsen noise and vibration from passing trains.

The temporary restraining order issued by Benton County Superior Court Judge Robert Swisher only stops work until June 11. But attorneys representing nearby Crosspointe Apartments LLC then will seek to completely stop the project until the city of Kennewick does another environmental study on the effects of moving the train tracks 100 feet closer to the apartments and nearby homes.

If the judge agrees, that would stop work until at least September, which could jeopardize millions of dollars of state funding for a project that's been in the works for years, said John Ziobro, Kennewick city attorney.

"Our experts and their experts simply disagree," Ziobro said. "We haven't been able to convince them we're right, and we're not convinced they're right."

The project would move a set of Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway Co. tracks running parallel to Clearwater Avenue about 100 feet to the north and about 30 feet underground so an overpass for Columbia Center Boulevard can be built over them.

But the plan has been opposed from the beginning by Crosspointe Apartments, which doesn't agree that the planned mitigation, including a 5-foot high berm to cut down noise, are good enough.

"Both noise and vibration will increase," said Danford Grant, an attorney with Seattle law firm Danielson Hartigan Leyh & Tollefson who is representing Crosspointe Apartments. In particular, Grant said moving the tracks 100 feet closer would double vibration from passing trains.

Bruneau Avenue homeowner Richard Hargis agreed that vibrations, which he said have cracked windows in his home, would only increase if the tracks are moved closer.

"There are a lot of houses here that are going up on sale, and a lot of it is

because of the vibration and the noise," the retired railroad worker said. While he thinks moving the tracks 30 feet underground would decrease the noise, "I think the vibration would increase."

Crosspointe's attorneys have fought the project since 2002, when Kennewick issued a mitigated determination of nonsignificance for the project, as required by the State Environmental Policy Act. The Kennewick Board of Adjustment upheld the city's determination after Crosspointe appealed it, bringing the dispute to court.

"We're asking the city to prepare an environmental impact statement so these impacts are fully discussed and fully disclosed, and perhaps most important, that all the proposed and possible alternatives are considered," Grant said.

"We needed to move quickly," since construction on the project began earlier this month, he said.

Grant wouldn't speculate on what kind of alternative mitigation would please his clients, only that the current plan isn't acceptable. Crosspointe posted a \$50,000 bond to reimburse any extra costs of delaying the project until the June 11 hearing.

That's when both sides will argue their cases on whether to halt the project until September, when a judge can hear Crosspointe's appeal of the Board of Adjustment's decision.

Ziobro said that long of a delay puts Kennewick at risk of losing a \$3.7 million grant from the state's Surface Transportation Program and a \$3.2 million grant from the state Transportation Improvement Board -- the lion's share of funding for the project.

Delay also could force Kennewick to renegotiate the \$230,000 contribution from Burlington Northern for the project, he said. The project has also received grants of \$20,000 each from the Port of Kennewick and Ben Franklin Transit and \$5,000 each from Benton County, Kennewick School District and Kennewick Irrigation District, he said.

Kennewick's argument is "That we have mitigated the noise, and that the vibration is insignificant," Ziobro said. "What's important on our end is, there's been lots of public involvement. There have been public meetings, and we've tried to keep the public informed."

And, of course, there's the benefit of not having train tracks crossing Columbia Center Boulevard, he added.

"It's going to improve traffic on a busy street. And when it's complete, it will be better for all concerned," he said.

Nearby resident Hargis agrees that the underpass would be a good thing.

"I know the cost of railroad crossings in fatalities and accidents," he said. But he and his neighbors who've opposed the project want compensation from the railroad or from Kennewick for any increased vibration damage to their homes, as well as any reduction in property values from having trains running so close by.

"We need to find an alternative," he said.



GROUNDBREAKING for the start of work to realign Highway 99 in the Salmon Creek area took place last week. From left are Steven Gorcester of state Transportation Improvement Board, State Rep. Tom Mielke, U.S. Rep. Brian Baird, State Sen. Don Carlson, Clark County commissioner Betty Sue Morris, and State Sen. Don Benton.

Work starts to realign Highway 99

A groundbreaking ceremony May 27 kicked off work on the realignment of NE Highway 99 in the Salmon Creek area.

The work will widen and realign Hwy 99 onto NE 20th Ave. between NE 129th and NE 138th streets. In addition, NE 134th St. will be widened between Highway 99 and east of NE 20th Ave., and the NE 20th Ave. bridge over I-205 will be widened.

The project is the first in a series of planned improvements in the Salmon Creek area. Officials say the work will improve safety by providing better access to existing streets and business driveways.

A vacated, two-story building in the path of the new construction has been purchased by the County for \$492,000 and will be demolished.

At the groundbreaking, County commissioner Betty Sue Morris expressed pride in the County's Public Works department resulting in the "multifaceted solution and cooperation" leading up to the current plan.

"We take great pride in our public works staff," said Mor-

ris, saying she believes the County's Public Works department might be the best in the state and nation.

Morris said \$10 million of the funding needed for the realignment of Hwy 99 was acquired by U.S. Rep. Brian Baird, whom Morris called "our hero."

"It was not an option to get funding for this project," joked Baird, as he praised the cooperation of local, state and federal agencies in bringing the work to reality.

Baird said every \$1 billion spent on transportation projects creates 47,000 jobs. He said the Salmon Creek project would reduce commuting times and allow residents to spend more time with their families.

"I suggest we name this intersection after Betty Sue Morris," said Baird in praising Morris' role in the project. Morris declined.

Matt Hall, project manager for Clark County, said federal and state funds will each pay about 40 percent of the \$9.6 million construction job. County road funds will pay 18 percent, and Clark Public

Utilities will pay 4 percent for water line and conduit movements.

The new NE 20th Ave. will be wider, with sidewalks and bicycle lanes on both sides of the road, said Hall.

The project will include the widening of NE 20th Ave. bridge over I-205 to include turning lanes and bicycle lanes. Workers will install street lighting and signal and intersection improvements at NE 20th Ave. and NE 134th St.

Hall said Hwy 99 will remain open as a local access road.

Hall said future phases over several years will include relocating the Park and Ride facility, the southbound I-205 off-ramp and the northbound I-5 on-ramp. The long-range plan is to construct a diamond intersection at I-5 and NE 134th St., all of which could take several years.

Completion of the road work on the first phase of the project is expected this fall. Improvements to the NE 20th Ave. bridge are expected by spring 2005.

Plans emerge for a people-friendly West Main St.

By Amy M. E. Fischer

Jun 23, 2004 - 07:37:23 am PDT

In a move that could make West Main Street a pedestrian-friendly shopping destination and residential area, transportation planners are considering rerouting traffic through West Kelso.

Four years ago, experts predicted that by 2020, an average of 100,000 vehicles daily would travel Cowlitz Way and West Main Street. Now, roughly 90,000 cars use those roads every day, according to an Eastern Washington University professor who is studying the area.

After conducting numerous traffic studies over the last decade, local transportation planners have come up with a preliminary traffic rerouting concept they think would ease congestion. The plan involves connecting the Allen Street Bridge to Catlin Street, which would funnel traffic directly to the Ocean Beach Highway/Washington Way intersection, said Rosemary Siipola, transportation planner for the Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Planning Organization.

The overall cost for the plan, which includes many other smaller traffic changes such as extra turn lanes and roundabouts, would be between \$4 million and \$5 million, Siipola said. Once the city receives the \$2 million in federal funding it has applied for, Kelso would seek out money from the state's transportation improvement board.

"If we ever see funding, we can move forward on it," Siipola said.

The hope is that West Main Street, now flowing with fast traffic in two directions, would be transformed to a quieter commercial and residential area with diagonal parking and landscaping, Siipola said.

"It could a cool little area," Siipola said. "It's a golden opportunity to redevelop some really neglected areas."

Grassy medians would be installed on Catlin Street, preventing drivers from cutting through neighborhoods to escape traffic on Washington way, she said. The current heavy traffic patterns through the neighborhoods north of the fairgrounds have stifled neighborhood development, she said.

Although cars driving west on the bridge could choose to drive onto West Main Street or Catlin Street, cars driving east would have access to the bridge only via Catlin Street, which would be four lanes, according to maps Siipola provided.

Exactly where Catlin Street, which now lies at right angles to cross streets, would curve to meet the bridge has not been determined, Siipola said. If necessary, the city would buy out the restaurant and buildings just east of Burgerville to make way for the rerouting, she said.

Few business owners have a problem with the plan, Siipola said. However, those who are leasing property or want to sell are in limbo, waiting for the final word on the rerouting, said Community Development Manager Kent Anderson.

The idea meshes well with the city's developing vision for West Kelso's future. In recent months, city planners and urban planning professor Bill Kelley of Eastern Washington University have held several community workshops to learn what people want for the area.

With a goal of attracting regional visitors, Kelley and his students are drafting a long-term plan for West

Kelso. The plan includes beautifying the area with landscaping, trails and public plazas, bolstering commerce, adding apartments and condominiums and developing the riverfront. Kelley will prepare a final draft to present to the City Council this fall.

If the traffic revisions don't happen, "we should just bulldoze the entire city," Siipola said. "With this, the whole West Main area could really redevelop into something special."


[Print Page](#)

BBCC builds a parkway to the future

*By Sebastian Moraga
Herald staff writer*

Loop around campus to ease traffic flow, pedestrian safety

Soon, attending Big Bend Community College will be a walk in the park. Or a drive.

A parkway around campus will be built at BBCC, courtesy of joint efforts from the institution and Grant County.

The parkway, whose construction began Monday, will consist of a 1.5-mile road surrounding BBCC, starting on 32nd Street, north towards Andrews street, looping around the back side of campus on 26th street, and then hooking onto Randolph Road.

Lights will be placed all the way around the parkway, and though Chanute street will be closed, a pathway will replace it.

The \$1.5 million project was funded in two-thirds by a state grant from the Transportation Improvement Board, and one third from the county. No money from the college will be spent on the construction of the parkway said BBCC president Bill Bonaudi.

Bob Bersanti, a design construction engineer for Grant County Public Works, which is in charge of the project, said that the parkway, which has been in the minds of the department and the college for about two years, will be finished by the end of September of this year.

One of the purposes of the parkway will be to separate college from non-college traffic, Bonaudi said.

Having the parkway will be a decrease in what Bersanti called the "confrontation" between pedestrians and motorists, particularly for students coming out of class, heading to ball games, or exercising on the sidewalks, as well as a reduction on street parking.

"It will be safer, as far as that is concerned," he said.

Bonaudi said that currently, traffic on Chanute street is a problem, and the parkway will eliminate flow on that street entirely, turning it into a paved walkway.

The parking at BBCC is bound to receive a shot in the arm, given that though street parking on Chanute will be eliminated, four additional parking lots come with the construction of the parkway. Bonaudi said that no existing parking would be lost.



CUTLINE: Heavy machinery decorates the summery landscape at Big Bend Community College, as a parkway, which will close down Chanute street, will be finished by September, enclosing the campus on a loop that authorities hope will ease traffic flow and increase the safety of students on foot.

Calling the project "a great idea," Bonaudi said he was excited by the prospect of having the parkway, pointing out that it would add to the college concept and character of a whole campus, instead of a series of buildings.

"There is an aesthetic contribution (the parkway) makes, as well as a practical one," he said. "It will give the public direct access to the library and the ATEC center."

Students gave the upcoming project mostly favorable reviews. As expected, they did not rave about the existing and future closure of streets and pathways due to its construction. Chad Platt said he had had to adjust his time management to make up for the time spent walking.

Some other students viewed the situation from a healthy side. "It makes it harder to drive, but I have two legs," Janel Rangel said. "Besides, isn't 30 percent of Americans obese anyway?"

The Arlington Times

172nd bids come in \$2 million over budget

Sen. Haugen, TRAP, others race clock to find solution

Steve Stav

The Arlington Times

ARLINGTON — An impromptu crisis-management team averted a possible disaster June 21 when it was announced that Arlington will not have to foot the bill for a projected 30 percent increase in the cost of the 172nd Street overpass project.

"The taxpayers of Arlington will not have to pay one penny more than they've already committed to [the project]," State Senator Mary Margaret Haugen (D-10th) said June 21. The bulk of the additional cost — close to \$2 million — will be paid for by state contingency funds, she said. The city of Marysville, who had pledged \$50,000 toward the renovation project, will pay an additional sum; the exact amount has yet to be determined.

Arlington, which is co-managing the project with the Washington State Department of Transportation, had pledged \$700,000.

Haugen's statement ended five frantic days of phone calls and face-to-face lobbying by Marysville-Arlington Transportation Relief Action Plan chair Becky Foster, Arlington Mayor Margaret Larson and Arlington City Councilmembers.

When Arlington City Engineer Paul Richart and other staffers unsealed the bids on the WSDOT-estimated \$6.5 million project, the lowest bidder proved to be Shea Graham Construction of Spokane, with a bid of \$7,117,425. WSDOT had previously calculated actual construction costs to be \$5.2 million.

"I just about had a stroke when I heard the news," Foster said. "I got on the phone right away."

While Foster speed-dialed and Richart consulted with his counterparts at WSDOT, Arlington City Councilmembers and City Administrator Kristin Banfield — in Ocean Shores for a three-day Association of Washington Cities Conference — took more direct action. Coincidentally, members of the State Transportation Improvement Board and WSDOT were also attending the conference.

"We met with them face-to-face," said Councilwoman Sally Lien. "At no time did anyone consider not going forward with the project on schedule."

Until Monday morning's developments, Councilmembers were preparing for a worst-case scenario of forming a Road Improvement District to pay for half of the increased amount, with a city bond to cover the remainder.

Foster was quick to credit Haugen's efforts in averting what could have been a very difficult situation for Arlington.

"When I picked up the phone Wednesday, the response was immediate," she said. "[County Councilman] John Koster put me in touch with Senator Haugen; the whole County Council has been very supportive in trying to find a solution."

City of Arlington Engineer Paul Richart couldn't completely account for the cost discrepancy, but declared that the proposal was a "good bid," noting that the next lowest bidders were "very, very close" to Shea Graham's.

Richart said that a dramatic increase in the price of steel and concrete undoubtedly account for most of the discrepancy in the original estimate.

WSDOT is currently reviewing it's original estimate, he said, adding that the agency has yet to examine and approve of the current low bid.

Phase one of the overpass renovation — which will add a turn lane to the the congested roadway — will proceed as hoped sometime this summer, Foster said.

"This has just been a minor speed bump," Foster said. "It wasn't enough to put us in the ditch."

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New road will link Kent Valley to I-5

Wednesday, June 30, 2004

By **JANE HADLEY**

SEATTLE POST-INTELLIGENCER REPORTER

Construction is under way on a new five-lane road linking the Kent Valley industrial area to Interstate 5, a project that a city engineer says should improve traffic generally in the Kent Valley.

The \$30 million project will extend and widen South 228th Street west from 54th Avenue South to Military Road South. Military Road will be widened from there south to state Route 516, the Kent-Des Moines Road, which links up with I-5.

The new road will give drivers, especially of freight trucks coming from warehouses between South 212th Street and James Street, a direct route to I-5, said Ken Langholz, Kent's engineering supervisor.

The road also will take a lot of traffic off state Route 167 and the West Valley Highway, which many people now use to get to roads that connect to I-5, he said.

A groundbreaking ceremony is being held today.

More than half the project -- \$16 million -- is being paid for through a local improvement district tax assessment on more than 2,600 parcels, including condominiums, single-family residences, warehouses and local businesses.

The warehouses belong to companies such as REI and the Boeing Co. The Green River Valley, which includes Auburn, Kent and Tukwila, has the second-largest concentration of truck distribution centers on the West Coast, according to the state Department of Transportation.

The state and the city of Kent each are putting in about \$7 million.

Because the climb up the west valley wall is so steep, contractors will cut into dirt at the top and bring about a half million cubic yards down to the bottom of the slope, Langholz said.

The city will let the dirt sit for at least a year before starting road construction in order to avoid soil settlement problems, he said.

The city has to enhance wetlands at four different sites elsewhere to compensate for the loss of wetlands from the project.

Phase 2 is a \$42 million project to build underpasses under two sets of railroad tracks. That project will reduce delays from the 60 trains that go by daily, reduce the risk of collisions and allow trains to go faster. Langholz said the city so far has raised only about \$6 million for Phase 2.

One of the major contributors will be the Freight Action Strategy program, a partnership of 12 cities, three ports, three counties and public and private organizations, which seeks to streamline the movement of freight in the Seattle-Everett-Tacoma area.

The Phase 2 project would be the partnership's 10th project. Seven have been completed.



Wednesday 7 July, 2004

Top Stories

Work to begin on Burdin Boulevard

By: Stephen Mercer

July 07, 2004

A complete renovation of one of the busiest streets in Grand Coulee begins next Monday.

Earlier this month, the city of Grand Coulee accepted Moses Lake-based Basin Paving's \$269,450 bid for work to Burdin Boulevard.

Work will run from Monday through August 30. Traffic delays are likely, with traffic reduced to one lane. Building access will remain open during construction.

The project is mainly funded by a \$243,000 grant from the state's Transportation Improvement Board.

The renovation will run on Burdin Boulevard from highway 174 to Second Street.

The grant will go toward fixing some drainage and runoff problems, especially near the hospital's clinic, and fix curbs. Sidewalks that are in need of repair in front of homes owned by Grant County Housing and Urban Development should also receive repair.

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The Herald - Everett, Wash. - www.HeraldNet.com

Published: Thursday, July 8, 2004

Arlington presses for more bridge money

By Lukas Velush and Scott Morris
Herald Writers

Arlington has ponied up extra cash for a new 172nd Street NE bridge, and now it wants Marysville to do the same.

Both cities consider a wider bridge over I-5 a must, saying plans for new retail development in Smokey Point already have been restricted by poor access the current bridge offers.

Folks behind the grassroots effort to get funding for a new \$9 million bridge have been scrambling since they found out last month the lowest bid was \$2 million more than expected.

That gap has been whittled to \$375,000, in part because Arlington has agreed to increase its contribution from \$230,000 to \$700,000. The rest is coming from state and federal sources.

"If we're going to put \$700,000 in for our side of the freeway, wouldn't it be kind of nice if Marysville would chip in \$400,000 for their side of the freeway?" asked Sally Lien, an Arlington city councilwoman.

Marysville Mayor Dennis Kendall said his council will make a decision on whether to increase its contribution next week. "We think it's something that's got to get going, and it's got to get going now."

Kendall said Marysville is short on cash, but would take a look at reserves. The city also plans to find out if it can agree to pay the \$400,000, but defer payment until next year.

Sen. Mary Margaret Haugen, D-Camano Island, said she's optimistic Marysville will pitch in.

"I hope Marysville can step up to the plate on this," she said. "This is a partnership. I'm sure they'll do what's right."

In the meantime, deadlines are approaching.

The contractor needs a decision by July 30, and a pitch for more money from the state goes before the Transportation Improvement Board on July 22, so Marysville has to act quickly, said Paul Richart, Arlington's city engineer.

The state has agreed to contribute \$3 million, and Arlington is going to ask for another \$700,000.

By asking the state for more, "... we are officially saying we will find a way to put political pressure on Marysville," Richart told the Arlington City Council on Tuesday. The council voted 6-0 to direct Richart to apply for more state money.

The state Department of Transportation also increased its contribution from \$614,000 to \$1.2 million.

If final funding comes together, construction will start this summer.

The project would replace the two-lane 172nd Street NE bridge with one that is six lanes. Later, when more funding becomes available, a new cloverleaf ramp would be built, intersections would be widened and a park-and-ride would be built.

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Overpass funding OK'd

Marysville officials agree to lend financial support for a new bridge at 172nd Street NE.

By Lukas Velush
Herald Writer

MARYSVILLE - Saying that a new, wider 172nd Street NE bridge is crucial to the city's economic growth, the City Council on Monday found a way to chip in up to \$400,000 for a much sought after bridge over I-5.

Without the financial help, construction on a \$9 million bridge that is the main access point to Smokey Point could have been delayed indefinitely.

Business leaders who last year rallied around the need for a new bridge were shocked last month when they learned that the bid for construction - which is supposed to start later this summer - came in \$2 million more than expected.

Arlington and the state Department of Transportation have committed to increasing their contributions, so with Marysville on board, all that's left is persuading the state Transportation Improvement Board to kick in an extra \$700,000.

And that's much more likely now that all of the rest of the funding has been lined up, said Paul Richart, Arlington's city engineer.

"That was a \$2 million shortfall last month," he said. "Thirty days later we've got a line on almost all of it. That tells you how critical this (bridge) is to the region."

Still, Marysville's decision didn't come easily, as council members expressed frustration about Arlington not notifying the city earlier that there was a shortfall, and that the deadline for raising the money to cover the shortfall is so short. They went as far to say their relationship with Arlington could be harmed.

The bridge would take about two years to build.

Richart said the Transportation Improvement Board will make its decision July 23. Arlington - the lead agency on the project - must tell DOT whether all the funding needed is available by July 26, when the bid would expire.

If it does, the project would be delayed for at least two months. Going out to bid again would cost another \$25,000 to \$40,000.

"We're going down to the wire," Richart said.

The bid was off so much because prices for construction material including steel and concrete have increased, DOT officials said.

Although the city is short on cash, the Marysville council found a way to get the money. Arlington won't bill the city until the end of next year or in early 2006.

"We feel that area is where the economic development is going to be," Marysville Mayor Dennis Kendall said. "We're working hard to make sure the city is going to be able to grow."

He said the city hopes that new businesses will be built in the area in the interim, raising taxes that would allow it to avoid dipping into reserves.

A second reason to pitch in, Kendall said, is Marysville expects to annex the Lakewood area west of I-5, and the main access point is 172nd Street NE.

Richart said improved access is even more crucial to Arlington, saying restrictions on growth could be put in place if the road isn't improved.

Arlington is chipping in \$700,000 for the new bridge, DOT \$2.9 million and the Transportation Improvement Board \$3 million - \$3.7 million if it approves the \$700,000 request.

The project would replace the two-lane 172nd Street NE bridge with one that is six lanes. Later, when more funding becomes available, a new cloverleaf ramp would be built, intersections would be widened and a park-and-ride would be built.

Reporter Cathy Logg contributed to this report.

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